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# "Good Design" : an analysis of the term as it applies to the interior design industry

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# "Good Design": An analysis of the term as it applies to the interior design industry

by

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This is to certify that the master's thesis of

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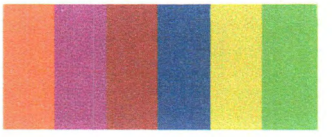
Signatures have been redacted for privacy

I dedicate this thesis
to my father, Robert Franco, Sr.,
for all his work and devotion in
providing the basic necessities
in life and for encouraging
me to pursue my education.



"Color is a powerful expression, for it is color that changes our lives."

Robert X. Franco, Jr.

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# INTRODUCTION

"There are no ugly objects; one only has to display them well."
(Franco Albini, 1990)

The Chicago Athenaeum, a non-profit organization and museum of architecture and design, features examples of products that are considered "Good Design." Annually, the Museum also sponsors an annual international competition of Good Design. The competition, juried by design professionals, bases its evaluation of entries on the criteria of aesthetics, product innovation, and function (Good Design brochure, 2001). Dieter Rams, a German Industrial Designer who is well-known for his design leadership with the Braun Corporation, and who is a professor and author of design, has defined Good Design to be comprised of ten elements. These ten elements specify that a design should be Innovative, Enhances, Aesthetics, Understandable, Unobtrusive, Honest, Environmentally Friendly, Enduring, Consistent, Simple (Rams, Ten Principles for a Good Design, 1993). The author does not dispute Dieter Rams' beliefs, but was intrigued to know if other design professionals agreed with this definition. It is was believed by the author that the definition provided by Dieter Rams could be used as a foundation to establish a more concise definition of the term "Good Design." In addition to this, the author believed that there could be more elements beyond those mentioned by Dieter Rams. There was also some curiosity as to whether a hierarchical order existed for these terms when applying them to a design.

For a popular or non-design industry audience, the term "Good Design" may be

considered just another subjective term used to describe something that may be of "high style," aesthetically pleasing, functional, or even used in contrast to something that is poorly designed. Yet competition judges, interior design professionals, educators, and design journalists use the term frequently and distinctly to describe a product or service that they feel is an example of what "Good Design" represents. Despite such prescribed standards, people have different perceptions of what constitutes "Good Design." Consequently, there is not a universal understanding, nor a commonly accepted standard usage, of the term.

Through a questionnaire, the author administered a survey to Interior Design professionals to develop an accepted standard for communicating the meaning of the term "Good Design." The rationale behind selecting the subjects is that each professional has his/her own perception of "Good Design." Because of this difference in perception, interior design professionals, interior design scholar/authors, and consumers do not have a clear understanding of how "Good Design" is determined.

By surveying interior design professionals, the results gathered, would identify common links so that a clear understanding of the term could be established, not only within these groups, but also for society in general. The definition derived from this study would give each group the ability to communicate more effectively about areas of design. The response would represent a variety of terms recognized among interior design professionals. From the responses, a synthesized analysis of the term would be evaluated. Throughout this paper the term Good Design is written in reference to both the design process and the design profession. There is adequate discussion on these areas; therefore this paper will focus on the product.

## Statement of Problem

The problem is defining what "Good Design" is. Is it such a subjective term that it can have no meaning without context? If it really has no meaning, then why do scholars and practitioners use it to describe or set criteria for a product or service? Literature written about Good Design indicates that it can be any number of vague criteria—from high style, to aesthetics and functionality. Designers seem to contradict this whole belief by adding a long list of terms such as "environmentally friendly" and "substance" to the nondescript term. Through our training, as designers, we are encouraged to create using the principles and elements of design. How do the elements and principles of design fit with this term? If designers adhere to these principles, why is/is not the finished product considered "Good Design"? Ultimately, the disparity in the use of this term is frustrating for people within the profession, as well as for the public, and prevents clear communication across disciplines.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to clarify the term "Good Design" by drawing a consensus using a modified Delphi Technique; and (2) to propose a synthesized analysis of the term to the industry by delivering it to design professionals in an established publication. The author's hypothesis is that interior design professionals who critique and design often do not hold a similar standard of "Good Design" in common. This is problematic, because it

does not provide industry-wide validation, thus making the term confusing to design professionals, as well as to the public.

It is clear that throughout the past ten years, design, in general, has had a stronger influence on our society and the way consumers purchase products and services. It is also clear that retailers have marketed "Good Design" in such a way that it is now part of our way of life. For example, Target is a large retail department store located throughout the United States. In the past few years, Target has been marketing products by having high profile designers such as Michael Graves and Phillippe Stark design residential interior products that may be perceived as samples of "Good Design." One can obviously see the need to consider "Good Design." The product may appear to be aesthetically pleasing, and it may create a phenomenological experience for the consumer, but many designers might disagree that these products are representative of "Good Design." It is important to research this idea more fully, because as the differences in perception grow, the average person is led to believe that "Good Design" relates solely to "high style," function, and aesthetics. It is the author's intention to provide a solid definition on which these beliefs are based.

The following questions will be asked through the interview process. Also included here is the rationale for asking them:

- What is, in your opinion, the most important principle that represents "Good Design"?

**Rationale**: The respondent is able to add to, or agree with, the ten principles outlined by Dieter Rams' article. It also indicates a level of importance that is significant to creating a product of "Good Design."

- From the list of principles outlined by Dieter Rams, list the three most important principles of good design, including your own principles listed above.

**Rationale**: This allows the respondent to dictate a level of importance to the

principles, thus creating a consensus of the most important terms that represent "Good Design." These can then be applied to the design industry as a whole.

## Significance of Study

The significance of this study is to reach a consensus for defining the term "Good Design." Should it be determined that there is no concise definition, then it is significant to identify a common link that can be passed on to designers, educators, scholars, and the public in order to gain a broader understanding of design. Interior Designers have been struggling with trying to gain theoretical substance and respect from joint industries to justify the profession. Unless the essence of "Good Design," is defined, then the theoretical foundation behind the study and practice of interior design will weaken. Resultant of this could be a lack of validation of, or respect for, design education and design. The significance of this study is also to encourage people to think about, and consider more closely, products and services of "Good Design."

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Terminology

Before conducting an analysis of, and supporting literature review for, the term "Good Design," it was necessary to consider the origins and individual meanings of the terms: good, design, interior design, good design, and bad design. It was critical to have thorough understandings of these terms before conducting any further research because they were to become the parameters of the whole analysis, and the author's impetus for launching the research. Along with using these definitions as part of the framework for the analysis of the term, "Good Design", opinions of interior design industry professionals and/or authors were researched and compiled from an extensive literature review. The following provides a view to the definitions, meanings, and backgrounds associated with these terms.

### "Design"

So, what is design? Design, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, dates back to a French noun used in the $14^{th}$-$15^{th}$ centuries, pronounced *designo*. The first English usage of the word "design" dates to 1548. It is defined as being a preliminary sketch; picture; or work of art; the plan of a building or any part of it; an outline of a piece of decorative work, after which the actual structure or texture is to be completed; or a delineation pattern. As a verb, additional definitions of the term define design as "to form a plan or scheme of the conceived and average in the mind, to originate mentally, plan out, and contrive" (Simpson & Weiner, The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989).

Research has revealed other meanings for the term "design", the first dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century. This early reference suggests that the term "design" implies a wide margin of freedom for individual thought and effort. It can devise a "system" applicable by all (Batchelder, Design in Theory and Practice, 1910).

Not until much later in the twentieth century was there more light shed on the term "design". Instead of a specific definition, there was clarification of common misuse of the word. Many were transferring the "design" meaning from the process of designing something to the thing itself. For example, one may comment on a beautifully-designed chair when what is meant is that the chair is beautiful. The design is what made the chair so beautiful. This confusion between intent and product is less probable when the product is unlikely to be judged aesthetically (Crosby, Fletcher, Forbes, Grange, Herron, Kurlansky, McConnell, Living by Design, 1978).

By the early 1980's, the term was described as a medium that allowed one to express feelings, philosophies, and ideas to communicate messages in a meaningful way. It was seen as an analytical way of organizing thoughts and translating them into a corporeal form (Landa, Introduction to Design, 1983).

While previous definitions had been more generic, by 1988 the term "design" was intertwined with the specific disciplines of interior design, industrial design, and architecture. Design was the decision that determined how a particular object, space, or building would be. It was also described as determination of form, with form being understood to be every aspect of every quality including size, shape, materials, structure, texture, and color that

makes one particular physical reality different from any other (Pile, Interior Design, 1988).

Still another definition, describes "design" as an elusive concept because it can mean many different things, depending on who is defining it and the context in which it is used. Because of this, it is apparent that the term "design" is dependent on how the word is used—as a verb or a noun—whether referring to architecture, engineering, or even interiors (Hanks, Belliston, Edwards, Design Yourself, 1990).

**"Interior Design"**

In this study, it is assumed that the term "design" is defined broadly enough to include various areas of design including: urban design, architecture, industrial design, graphic design, and interior design. All areas fall somewhere within a spectrum of design activity. Therefore, what is being defined is a form of design activity that will specifically include interior design and industrial design. It can be justified that industrial design, as applied to this analysis, is a key factor in interior design, because all interior spaces are equipped with products that are designed and manufactured by interior designers and industrial designers.

Historically, it is worth noting that the birth of interior design can be, in part, attributed to Elsie de Wolfe. Ms. de Wolfe was the first person to use the official title of interior decorator, when she became the nation's first, documented, interior decorator in 1905. For almost half a century, her rooms were copied and pronouncements repeated in newspaper and magazines that eventually shaped popular taste across the country (Smith, Elsie de Wolfe, 1982). Although today interior decorating is a mere sub-discipline of the many areas that

constitute interior design, it can be concluded that decorating, as an area of design as a whole, was practiced by 1905.

It was not until 1927 that the term "interior design" per se was used. In modernity, it is defined by the art or practice of planning and supervising the design and execution of architectural interiors and their furnishings (Miriam-Webster incorporated, 2000).

According to the American Society of Interior Designers, an organization of design professionals, Interior Design is the total creative solution for a programmed interior. It encompasses conceptual planning, aesthetics, and technical solutions applied to achieve the desired programmed interior. It is meant as a specific, intended purpose or use of the built environment. Interior Design concerns itself with more than just the visual or ambient enhancement. It seeks to optimize and harmonize the uses for which the built environment is created.

Many factors come into play when formulating the design solution, spatial dimension, and construction of a product or space with its potential and limitations. The designer must consider how the space is being used, e.g., work or leisure, entertainment or worship, healing, or learning. There is the space itself, what it signifies: power, authority, security, wisdom, achievement, or serenity. Also to be considered are the practical considerations like ease of access, amount of light, seating, and places to store or on which to set things. There are health and safety concerns, including special needs to be considered as well. The elements of design range from visual (color, light, form), to tactile (shape, texture), to the auditory (noise, echo). The designer must have an aesthetic and technical appreciation for these elements and

should be able to respond to these elements, not just individually, but also as the elements interact with each other. The designer must also be knowledgeable about the many types and characteristics, furnishings, accessories, and ornaments used in creating interiors (American Society of Interior Designers website).

To get a better idea of exactly what interior design is, it is useful to understand what interior designers do. According to the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), the professional interior designer is qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces.

For the purpose of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and practicing the health, safety and welfare of the public, the Professional Interior Designer is responsible for:

- Analyzing the client's needs, goals, life and safety requirements.
- Integrating findings with knowledge of interior design.
- Formulating preliminary design concepts that are appropriate, functional, and aesthetic.
- Developing and presenting final design recommendations through appropriate presentation media.
- Preparing working drawings and specifications for non-load bearing interior construction, materials, finishes, space planning, furnishings, fixtures, and equipment.
- Collaborating with professional services of other licensed practitioners in the technical areas of mechanical, electrical, and non-load bearing design as required for regulatory approval.
- Preparing and administering bids and contract documents as the client's agent.
- Reviewing and evaluating design solutions during implementation and upon completion.

(International Interior Design Association website).

For this research, the term "interior design", whether practiced or perceived, describes the

activity that designs an interior space. Usage here also takes into consideration all human senses, including tactile, visual, audio, taste, and smell. Also included is the phenomenological experience a person will have upon first impression of the designed interior space.

**"Good"**

The word good has been under attack from schoolrooms since the 19th century, with an insistence on *well,* rather than *good.* It has resulted in a split in connotation; *well* is standard, neutral, and colorless, while *good* is emotionally charged, emphatic (Merriam-Webster, 2000). This explains the phenomenological experience that one would have upon experiencing a space or product perceived as being "Good Design."

The term good, as an adjective, is reflected from the term better or best, and dates to before the 12th century. It is referred to as a favorable characteristic or tendency, handsome, attractive, good looks (Merriam-Webster, 2000). As a noun, it is something conforming to the moral order of the universe, assuming that it is good for all (Merriam-Webster, 2000). This potentially can be a matter of social acceptance, which will be addressed specifically later in this chapter. However, this definition does lead one to believe that aesthetics can be the driving force behind "Good Design." As an adverb, this is more directly related to the author's intentions for this research, as in when "good" is as an intensive, "a *good* long time" (Merriam-Webster, 2000).

**"Good Design"**

Grammatically, one cannot design good, but one can practice (what is believed to be) good design. So to think about "Good Design" is to think about how something is designed. Whether as a design practitioner or as the design beholder, one considers how something works, how it is put together, and how he/she reacts to the end product. It could be something simple or something complex. These factors all affect the question the author hopes to answer through this analysis.

As was previously determined, the term "design" can be used to describe various disciplines. So if the word "good" is attached to the word design, it can be assumed that "Good Design" is used with the intent of describing a space or product that is of high quality, exception, and excellence in every aspect of design, including how it works, how it is put together, and how a person reacts to the space or product.

The concept of "Good Design" was first introduced in elements of what was to be termed Modernism by European architects and designers in 1919 and throughout the 1920s. For a long time, however, Modernism was seen as appealing only to the avant-garde elite.

According to Grillo's book, *What is Design?*, it was not until the 1960's that the language or form of "Good Design" became interesting to the general public. New forms such as leaves, trees, flowers, and fruit are the elements of "Good Design," all found in nature. There also is a basic language that follows good design; it is divided into three categories: Archetypes, Proportion, and Composition. Under each of these categories, there are further subdivisions. They include under Archetypes: form, materials, climate, and

orientation. Under Proportion, there are openings, the world of man, and the world around us. Under Composition, there are energy, mass, motion, and idea or concept. More than ever before, the designer today is offered the opportunity to fall into step with the world around him/her, implying that good design is within the world around us, and part of nature.

In a similar definition, the author should mention that there are certain actions that influence "good design"—intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and aesthetic. One experiences all elements of the seemingly unrelated complex pattern to which the designer is subjected (Adams, Van Dommelen, Pappas, Design at Work: Its Forms and Function, 1960).

According to Loring, the author of *Positively Good Design*, controversy has been brewing for several years over the term "good design" by the mid-1980's. The problem is the term starts with one of the most bothersome four letter words, Good. Good for what? Good in what sense? A glance at history (as provided in this work alone) proves that one period reaches few agreements with the other on the stylistic aspect of good design (Loring, Architectural Digest, Positively Good Design, 1985). Kliment, an architectural critic, advocates that scale, proportion, materials, color, reflectivity, context, shade, shadow, appropriateness, typology, and symbolism are the elements of style (Kliment, Architectural Record, What is Good Design?, 1990). From these, one can make the assumption that style is directly related to, or is part of, "Good Design."

The most direct answer to the question "What is Good Design?" comes later from the author who inspired this research, Dieter Rams. While Kliment's view seems to approach only the elements of style, Rams outwardly prescribes objectives for designers to use to

create products of "Good Design." If others adhere to these principles, the result will be a product of timelessness and success. Dieter Rams emphasizes that designers need to improve their thinking processes, and also be encouraged to take huge steps to use said thinking processes to create "good design". This author also believes in introducing limits to the creative process by outlining guidelines and defining these points as requirements for "Good Design," as Rams has done with his ten principles for a good design. These principles include: Innovative, Enhances, Aesthetics, Understandable, Unobtrusive, Environmentally Friendly, Enduring, Consistent, Honest, and Simple. While Rams' principles might provide the most concise definition found to date, they still leave room for suggestion and interpretation. Thus, they do not provide a strong theoretical definition.

By the late 1990's, the term "Good Design" became so subjective to some that the belief was that there is no true definition. "Surrounding the phenomenon of Good Design is an aura of wholesomeness, which elevates it above human frailties. To this day, "Good Design" is a lofty concept that evades definition"(Vienne, Communication Arts Magazine, What's Bad About Good Design, 1997). Nonetheless, this ambiguity is no justification for a term that is widely used in the design industry to have no agreed-upon meaning.

Whereas in the beginning of the twentieth century, "good design" was for the elite anvant garde few, at the end of the twentieth century, "Good Design" is both high style and mass-market. "It is not about the perfect thing anymore, but about helping a lot of different people build their own personal identities," according to David Kelley, founder and CEO of IDEO, a prestigious product-design firm that specializes in products of good design, such as

Palm Pilot. Kelley adds, "Good Design is not going away. Designers will keep making objects that are simple, affordable, and useful, but they will also try to get consumers to use their imagination. Good Design will tell a story. It might be everywhere, but there is still room for purely beautiful and the utterly useless. Good Design is not about style, but about composing with the right materials for the right function in a conceptually interesting way" (Betsky, When "Good Design" Goes Bad, 2000).

**"Bad Design"**

Before parameters for determining "Good Design" could be established, the author also wanted to understand what "Bad Design" was. Simply, it can be assumed that "Bad Design" is the opposite of "Good Design." However, the question becomes difficult to answer when it is considered that one does not know exactly what "Good Design" is. Then, therefore, how can it be determined what "Bad Design" is?

As an adjective, "bad" is derived from the word worse and can be defined as failing to reach an acceptable standard, poor, or unfavorable. It can also be morally objectionable and describe something in an unhappy state. Interestingly, the word "poor" can be defined as being less than adequate (Merriam-Webster, 2000). It then stands to reason that the word "poor" can be used as a substitute descriptor for "bad", as in "bad design" – something that is poorly designed, or something that is of poor design.

Another assumption made is that "Bad Design" can be related to bad taste, style, something artificial, poor quality in materials, or something that is not self-explanatory. It

can also be said that a product of low-quality or of substandard degree of design does not consider human senses, health, safety and welfare issues, the elements of the interior space, the phenomenological experience, design implementation, functionality, and appropriateness. If all or any one of these characteristics is missing, there is the potential justification of the product being defined as one of "Bad Design."

**Principles and Elements of Design**

The principles and elements of design are subjects of complexity on their own; there has been a long list of scholarly work substantiating this subject and not necessarily agreeable throughout the interior design industry. Clarification of this can constitute a thesis on its own, but this one does not. Interior Designers are trained and educated to practice the principles and elements of design. The author's research has determined that the principles and elements of design include several different beliefs for qualifying what principles and elements of design are. Several scholars have written what is believed to be a philosophy of design, a belief that by following the scholar's guidelines, a product or space will result in one of "Good Design."

Examples of what was found to be elements of design are: line, form, space, time, movement, light, color, texture, pattern, and nature. Examples of principles of design are: proportion, balance, rhythm, emphasis, unity, harmony, totality, time, value, resources, synthesis, iteration, change, relationships, competence, and service (Batchelder, The Principles of Design, 1918).

The author can define each of these terms, but it would not be beneficial to expect, ultimate results of this study. Just by reviewing all the principles and elements that were researched through several different pieces of literature, there seems to be no clear understanding or foundation to which a designer can adhere. It seems that it is all based on personal philosophy.

What follows are the sub-categories for the principles of the elements of architecture. It is interesting to note that these differ from those of Batchelder, in that their subcategories extend into the human senses.

| **Unity** | **Expressiveness** | **Magnitude** | **Function** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Elements of Unity** | style & fashion | scale | vision |
| | View and sunlight | setting | breathing |
| Texture | expression | time | hearing |
| Color | quality | | temperature |
| Tone | | | humidity |
| Direction | | | human movement |
| Proportion | | | safety |
| Solid & void | | | friction |
| Form & shape | | | seeing |
| | | | Security |
| **Aspect of Unity** | | | fire |
| | | | Nourishment |
| Dominance | | | Hygiene |
| Harmony | | | sanitation |
| Vitality | | | |
| Balance | | | |

(Smithies, Principles of Architecture, 1981)

As previously mentioned, these include the human senses, which go beyond the surface. What is meant by the surface is that it only pays attention to the appearance or feel of a

product or space; it does not go into the psychological, philosophical, or environmental areas of design theory. By contrast, in the typical designing process, the human senses are not taken into consideration with the most common principles and elements.

Dieter Rams, the inspiration behind this research, proposes the principles of design as being innovative, enhances, understandable, aesthetics, unobtrusive, honest, enduring, consistent, environmentally friendly, and Simple. What Mr. Rams does not include is how a designer should consider the senses and the phenomenological experience (Rams, "Ten Principles for a Good Design," 1993). The difference between his list and Smithies' list is that Mr. Rams believes that Environmentally Friendly should be considered a principle of design, a view that registers strongly with current design professionals who value this trend.

Principles of design are not hard and fast rules to be followed; they are simply guidelines that help the design process. The guidelines can be used at any time in one's career, and they may be revised to accommodate a troublesome or specific problem in order to provide a workable and agreeable solution (School of Interior Design, Elements and Principles of Design, 1981). This research is not disputing that these terms are not an important part of what "Good Design" is. These applications need to be considered before, during, and after the designed product or environment.

**The Perception of "Good Design"**

The primary goal of this section is to provide examples of how designers have thought about past, present, and future principles and elements of "Good Design." It provides a

representation of what designers feel are important philosophical issues of this topic. These examples indicate the variance in opinion throughout design history industry. They have been chosen based on each designer's specific rationale to provide a wide range of beliefs cemented in a foundation of literature, and thereby reinforcing the author's concrete beliefs of "Good Design."

With a return to the beginning of the twentieth century, Ms. Elsie de Wolfe and her approach to interior decorating can again be considered a precursor; this time with respect to the perception of "Good Design". Ms. de Wolfe's values were out of respect for French design, paying particular attention to style. In conduct, as in objects in communications, that artificiality can be a positive quality that celebrates the shaping power of imagination. She created a basic philosophy of domestic taste, which included simplicity, suitability, and proportion. Poor design included clutter, inconvenience, and ostentation (Smith, Elsie de Wolfe, 1982). Here, one understands that individuals sought to justify their actions by individual definitions, philosophies, and perceptions. From prehistoric times to the present, the individual has demonstrated his/her instincts to make things suit his/her needs, and to decorate them to delight the eye. This is evident whether the use was utilitarian, religious, or for innate necessity (Adams, Van Dommelen, Pappas, Design at Work: Its Forms and Functions, 1960).

The first noted use of the term "Good Design" was in 1919 by Walter Gropius, in the Bauhaus era, which originated in Germany. The Bauhaus is today considered the first school of design. Although this was the first usage, it does not mean that this term was not practiced

before 1919. However, the author has found no indication of common use of this term prior to this date.

The intent of the Bauhaus was to promote interaction between art and industry, accepting the machine as a reality of the times and comprehensively exploring its potential in all fields of design. Bauhaus believed the machine to be our modern medium of design. All design must recognize this fact of life and distill a new set of aesthetic criteria from it. Such a process would lead to clear organic form, the inter-logic of which will be radiant and naked, unencumbered by lying facades and trickeries. It teaches the common citizenship of all forms of creative work and their logical interdependence upon one another (Whitford, Bauhaus, 1984).

Walter Gropius raised points about how man, art, and craft should be taught about the process of good design and the effects buildings have on people who live in them (Whitford, Bauhaus, 1984). This can also be translated and applied to all areas of design, e.g., what effect the particular design has on an individual. Gropius believed in a unified artistic basis, which was the joining of art, industrialized society, man, and industry. It was a move toward a synthesis of technology and art. He felt the designs of Bauhaus should be clean and pure. The Bauhaus was also interested in curvilinear designs of expressionists, architects which exploded all plain conceptions of order, balance, symmetry, and rigid construction (Wolfe, From Bauhaus to Our House, 1999). Eventually, Gropius became the proponent of what was the International Style, which included the idea of style, history, functionalism, and the primary principles as architecture's volume, surfacing, materials, and avoidance of applied

decoration.

The principles of the International Style are few and general in scope. They are not merely formulas of proportions, such as distinguished Greek and Roman orders. They are fundamental, like the organic verticality of the gothic or the rhythmic symmetry of the Baroque. "These new conceptions of volume, rather than mass, regularity rather than aerial symmetry, and arbitrarily-applied decoration mark the productions of the International Style. The International Style has become evident and definable only gradually, as different innovations throughout the world have successfully carried out parallel experiments" (Hitchcock, Johnson, The International Style, 1966). This is an example of the looseness of interpretation in principles of design. It also indicates how principles can be manipulated to change with the times. Therefore, it seems that "Good Design" is ever-changing and not rigidly defined.

Le Corbusier, an influential architect of the early twentieth century, released several ideal principles to be followed in a process of design: (1) Mass, which is the element by which our senses perceive and measure, and are most fully affected; (2) Surface, which is the envelope of the mass, which can diminish or enlarge the sensation the latter gives; and (3) Plan, which is the generation of both mass and surface, which is by and whole irrevocably fixed (Le Corbusier, Towards a New Architecture, 1986). Looking back, Gropius also believed that the satisfaction of emotional requirements is just as important as that of the material requirements into which the goal of a new conception of space is more important than mere austerity in functional perfection.

"Industrial design keeps the customer happy; it keeps the client in the black and the designer busy" (Loewy, Raymond Loewy: Pioneer of American Industrial Design, 1990). This direct pragmatic approach was the secret of Raymond Loewy's success in the early twentieth century. Lowey indicates in his book, *Raymond Lowey: Pioneer of American Industrial Design*, that design seems so modern to our eyes today. Forms arouse all sorts of unconscious associations, the simpler the form, the more agreeable the sensation evoked. Interestingly enough, unless simplification can be called a philosophy, Loewy did not develop a philosophy of design. His criteria, which serve to guide design solutions, were simplicity, ease of maintenance and repair, grace or beauty, convenience in use, economy, durability, expression of the function and form (Loewy, Raymond Loewy: Pioneer of American Industrial Design, 1990).

In 1940, The Museum of Modern Art in New York City showed an exhibit by Ray and Charles Eames, a husband and wife design team famous for their exhibition of "Good Design." It consisted of useful objects of American design, which exemplified household products that represented "Good Design" based on cost, aesthetics, and function. The Eames always discussed objects within the framework of the functionalism that dominated the discourse of design. They insisted on stressing the process of design in manufacturing, which helped validate their delight in the appearance of a particular object. Some of the objects were extremely beautiful, at the insistence of their instructional qualities. However, the contextualizing and the emphasis of process avoided discussion of the visual, per se (Kirkham, Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century, 1998).

It is of interest to note that the Eames' focus on design in manufacturing might have originated in the Bauhaus philosophy that the machine is the modern medium of design. Also, the Eames' beliefs seem to apply primarily on aesthetics, function and efficiency of mass production. It is the author's thought that these become only part of the basis from which to continue additional research.

In *Good Design is Goodwill Design*, Paul expresses that over the years of both product and graphic design, Ray and Charles Eames created an expressive collection of distinguished designs. Ironically, this body of good work makes one painfully aware of the abundance of poor design. Talent is a rare commodity in the arts, as it is in other professions. The designer must contend with encyclopedic amounts of information and seemingly endless streams of opinions and the day-to-day problem of finding new ideas or creativity. It is believed that "Good Design" is not based on nostalgia or "trendiness". Intrinsic quality is the only measure of "Good Design." "Good Design" is a thorough merging of form and function and an awareness of human values expressed in relation to industrial production for a democratic society. Further, it is "Good Design," but the implication of its modernity needs to be stressed. In retrospect, this point can be validated by Le Corbusier's belief that to be modern is not to be in fashion; instead, it is a state. It is necessary to understand history and to find continuity between that which was, that is, and that which will be (Paul, Good Design is Goodwill Design, Communication Arts Magazine, 1993).

By the 1970's, the scale and complexity of modern problems necessitates collaborative design. Any industrially proceeded object is the result of countless experiments of wrong

systematic research. The design school must recognize this and equip the student with a common basis by which individuals are able to create together a superior unit of work. The education of the designer must include a thorough, practical manual and training in workshops actively engaged in production, coupled with sound theoretical instruction in design (Evans, Man the Designer, 1973). By doing so, this will allow the student to get in touch with their personal ideals and develop a personal design philosophy, ultimately leading to the development of future guidelines toward their perception of "Good Design."

Terence Conran, a current-day entrepreneur/designer/retailer, when asked, What is "Good Design"?, responded,

> "This question has been asked more frequently than any other. Answering it is never easy. As anyone has ever ventured into the murky waters will tell you, defining "Good Design" can rapidly turn into a circular exercise that has to do with splitting semantic hairs then deciding whether a teapot pours properly. Is "Good Design" simply what the majority of people believe to be "Good Design"? Is it something that can be measured or scored objectively? Does the concept of "Good Design" change according to social, political or economic circumstances? What are the constant factors that enable us to evaluate any object made at any time in history? Why should one person's judgment be any more noteworthy than another's should? What do we mean by "Good"? What do we mean by "Design"? Design and the quality of life? If design affects the quality of life in a positive way, then it should be classified as "Good Design". For example, the paperclip is lightweight, inexpensive, functional, easy to use, durable, sustainable, and so brilliantly designed that we take it for granted. However, "Bad Design" is easily identifiable, whether it is the restaurant space where the tables are too close to each other with no defined traffic pattern, or the pen with erratic ink flow, or the chair that gives one a backache. These are all easily recognized as poor design" .
>
> "What "Good Design" <u>should</u> be is durable, safe, comfortable, easy to operate, and able to meet any of the myriad physical parameters implied in the notion of function and practicality. If design fails to function, it is often glaringly obvious. But even in cases where the technology is more complex and the

> demands are subtle, the distinction between something that works well and something that does not is still one that can be more or less objectively assessed. One can be taught to judge design on performance and suitability. On the functional side, it can be difficult to draw the line between design and technology, technological innovation or invention" (Conran, Terence Conran on Design, 1996).

Conran does not feel he is a theorist. Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out that centuries of debate about design and taste have skirted around the same issues without a real conclusion.

Louis Kahn was a twentieth century philosophical architect and designer who believed in nature as the maker or giver of presence. One can have a thought, but a thought has no presence until one calls on nature to exercise its powers of order to make it manifest. What is seen is the truth, because the truth is anything that happens. The fact that man can think of it makes it the truth. But does it indicate the nature of man? It does not seem so. It does involve comparison and criticism, so it cannot be employed, except to take stock of the things we do (Wurman, What Will be has Always Been The Words of Louis Kahn, 1986). This implies that nature needs to be invaluable in everything we do. Nevertheless, Louis Kahn believed that architecture has limits. When we touch invisible walls or limits, we know more about what is contained by them. Architecture and design are the thoughtful making of spaces, not the filling of areas prescribed by a client. It is the creating of space that evokes a feeling for appropriate use.

"The design or the making of things is a measurable act. In fact, at this point, we are physical nature itself, because in physical nature, everything is measurable. Even those

things that are yet unmeasurable, such as the most distant stars, we may assume they will eventually be measured. The psychic spirit is unmeasurable. The psyche is expressed by feeling and by thought, rendering it indefinitely unmeasurable. The psychic existence will call on nature for that which it waits to be. A rose wants to be a rose, man created our existence well. But the results are always less than the spirit of existence. This is the same way to accomplish the design of a building or space, it is what it is. You must follow the laws, but at the end, when the building becomes part of living, it must evoke unmeasurable qualities. The design phase involving qualities of the brick methods and construction is over, and the spirit of the guiding existence takes over" (Wurman, What Will Be Has Always Been, The Words of Louis Kahn, 1986).

Kahn was classical in his stability and symmetry of forms; he was romantic in his nostalgia for the middle ages. He earnestly applied the most advanced technological means, but this did not prevent him from using pillars. It went beyond schemes of functionalism and his distribution, but in many instances, he utilized functionalists aesthetics. He had a rationalist cult of stereometry, which the thin casings and total transparency of his blocks tended to refute. He mastered the vital concepts of organic, but he did not share in its disturbing morphology. It is a measure of Kahn's achievement and of his continuing influence today that the concept was exactly where architecture always started for him, even though he was sufficiently flexible to allow the initial "form" (Kahn's term for type) to be modified by the exigencies of the program. For Kahn, building remained a spiritual act, and it is hardly an accident that his best work was reserved for religious or extremely honorific

structures (Frampton, Modern Architecture: A Critical History, 1992). Louis Kahn believed in nature and natural light. He considered the window to be an instrument amenable to fine tuning, one which could be designed to provide effectively the interface between outside and inside in ever new and changing variations (Buttker, Louis I. Kahn, 1994). Kahn's philosophical approach inspires one to practice "Good Design," which brings one a little closer to identifying with his spiritual belief of Good Design.

Michael Graves, a predominant contemporary architect/designer of post-modern direction, embraces decorative detail, strong color, and forms that might seem arbitrary and even eccentric (Pile, A History of Interior Design, 2000). In an interview with Michael Graves, he asserted his belief that "'Good Design' is natural and part of nature. No one person can practice "Good Design." It is something that comes naturally" (Franco, An Interview with Michael Graves, 2001).

Steven Holl, a contemporary architect and designer, believes in phenomenology as a way of thinking and seeing. An agent for architectural conception, phenomenology affirms the importance of lived experience in authentic philosophy. It relies on perception and pre-existing conditions, and has no way of forming, or prior beginnings. Making empirical architecture requires a conception or a formative idea. Each project starts with information and disorder, confusion of purpose, program ambiguity, an infinity of materials, and form. Then, architecture and design is the result of acting on indeterminably (Holl, Steven Holl Architects, Writings: Phenomena and Idea, 2000).

Phillippe Starck, another current-day, high-profile, international designer, believes in

the role of intuition and emotion over reason. The role is closer to that of a fine artist, rather than an engineer, despite the mythical image he has constructed around himself (Sparke, A Century of Design: Design Pioneers of the 20th Century, 1998). "Phillippe Starck is crazy and a genius, yet tremendously lucid; he creates incessantly, driven by necessity and urgency, for himself and for us all. Touching us by his astute and intelligent work, but also because it comes from his heart. This is showing a belief that he has more personal opinions" (Starck, Starck, 1996).

**Ethics in Design**

It is important to touch briefly on ethics in design in order to narrow down responsibility between the designer and the way something is designed. In a discussion of ethics in design, there are two different applications that pertain to the topic of "Good Design." One is designing responsibly, in using materials that are honest and true to their nature and specific to the quality of the design. The design should be respectful of the surrounding environment and be sustainable. The second application is the professional responsibility of the designer with/to the client, given any fiduciary responsibility. According to Mary Jane Mc Quinlan, in an article in Metropolis Magazine about Green Dialogues, 2002, The Global Compact, The Global Reporting Initiative, and the Global Sullivan Principles, greater transparencies are being created about company behavior and public scrutiny over a company's willingness to "green" their entire supply chain with such initiatives as take-back requirements incorporated into the design process.

Initiatives such as this are becoming more popular within the design industry and are forcing designers to take immediate responsibility for their designs. It may be that we will discover that the laws that rule design of any kind are the laws of nature. They will be reduced to the fundamental principle of unity that prevails throughout all creation (Grillo, What is Design?, 1960). The world of materials and processes has also gone under great changes. For example, in producing a spoon today, the designer may choose from a multitude of materials such as foil, wood, steel, plastic, glass, aluminum, or paper. The manufacturing process may shape the spoon by cutting, pressing, stamping, pouring, or turning. These new, varied materials, coupled with the ingenuity of modern technology, are often another source of inspiration for the designer. They offer the opportunity of conceptualizing new applications for their (almost) limitless properties. Even, if the designer is attempting to stay true to the material, there are endless opportunities to produce the materials and to manipulate them to fit any desired design.

The author has also found that in researching ethics, there are principles surrounding this topic that specifically apply to environmental stewardship.

1] **Advocacy for safe products and services**—designers will advocate to their clients and employers for the development of buildings, landscapes, products, and communications in spaces that minimize environmental harm and are safe for people to use.

2] **Protection of the biosphere**—designers will seek to minimize the release of any pollutant that may endanger air, water, or earth.

3] **Sustainable use of material resources**—designers will strive to make sustainable use of renewable resources, including the protection of vegetation, wildlife inhabitants, open spaces, and wilderness.

4] **Reduction of waste and increasing recycling**—designers will try to minimize waste on

this land; they will design for durability, adaptability, repair, recycling and will include these requisites in their purchasing and specifications.

5] **Wise use of energy**—designers will choose environmentally safe energy sources and adopt energy-conserving means of production and operation whenever possible.

6] **Reduction of risk**—designers will seek to minimize environmental risks to the health of their employees and the users of their designs.

7] **Shared information**—designers will share information that will help their peers make the best choices in specifying materials and processes.

(Based on the Valdez Principles, developed by the Coalition of Environmentally Responsible Economies, 1996).

This list indicates that there is room for "Good Design" in the ethical realm, that ethics and the responsibility that the designer has to be "true" to the client, environment, materials, conditions, etc. It is the designer's responsibility to accept or reject a design. It is the designer's freedom of choice to do so, and it may involve the rejection of many tentative versions of design before one is found. As much freedom as a designer may have, it is still the designer's responsibility to respect, uphold, and communicate to his/her clients, environmental standards, and show honesty in materials and design philosophies of "Good Design."

**Design and Culture**

Design is in everything we do. It is part of every day of our lives. It affects every individual in every way. Because design has such a big impact on our lives, it is necessary to address how our culture responds to design, especially "Good Design."

"We are continually reminded that what we regarded as new and innovative yesterday may no longer be so appealing today. In our culture, "Good Design" stimulates people; it makes them react, captivates and engages them, and allows one to make contact with people. It wants to slap you in the face" (Fender, Interior Sources: Why Great Designs Matter, 2002). In recent years (during "strong" economic times), design or "Good Design" was broadened to be available to all social economic classes. For example, Target Corporation is a large retailer that operates through out the continental United States. Over the past several years, Target has commissioned several designers such as Michael Graves and Phillippe Stark, to design products of "Good Design." The philosophy behind this marketing plan was to make high style available to the masses, making "Good Design" affordable, not just for the wealthy.

In *What is Design*, Grillo states, "What in 'Good Design' is really only silent admission of defeat or lack of imagination in fear of so-called public opinion is glamorized under high-pressure advertising into the trend. To keep up with the trend, we want to have little modernized colonial pocket sized mansions with the porch crowned balustrade which no one will ever lean on as there is no way to get there. Or if the trend is modern, we will crash open our home with picture windows even if they should look at the next-door picture window at 20 feet away. But is this really what we want? We are not the victims of the false witnesses who try to convince us that we have such idiosyncrasies that we are weak minded and fit for the sanitarium. This indicates how shallow the consumer is in wanting bigger and better products and space; it is a competition to top the next best idea."

Everything from hotel interiors to computer exteriors has become a design statement

that expresses that worldview. Baby Boomers raised on the work of Charles and Ray Eames, and the innovations of the space age, have whole-heartedly embraced the trappings of modernism as nostalgia fueled "Good Design" (Betsky, When "Good Design" Goes Bad, Metropolitan Home, 2000). Design is rooted in historical context, and it also reveals social strata, not so much as you are what you eat, as you are what you buy. Greed, materialism, yuppies and design have been tarred with the same brush. You would think there would be no worse contemporary epithet than designer, designer water, designer drugs, designer jeans. The adjective has come to imply spurious value, cynical manipulation, the justification of inflated price through false impression of status and exclusivity (Conran, Terence Conran on Design, 1996). These are just a few examples of how design has affected our culture over the past 15-20 years. This shows that our culture is indeed "falling for" the shallow pretentious forms of design and the way they are marketed. It also indicates that the term "design" is overused in marketing products and spaces—everything is "designer," an indication that products and space are "good."

Gestalt theory is the psychological study and resulting theories of perception. Many of the Gestalt investigations and theories seem to have logical and practical application. These deal with the notion that all of us have a basic desire for unity and harmony. Simply stated, the basic principle is that images are first perceived as unified wholes before they are perceived as parts (Cheatham, Design Concepts and Applications, 1983). This theory can explain why we are so shallow and why we have an immediate reaction toward an attractive product or space. This can be one reason why communication between design and culture

has broken down and become more simplistic. The consumer no longer looks at the details, and instead, purchases spontaneously.

Our culture depends on products, filling our lives with the products that are: (1) an embodiment of notions of identity that are socially recognized and thus become tokens in the symbolic exchange of meaning; (2) instruments for individual and collective action that range from the provision of essential needs to hobbies and past times; and/or (3) tokens of economic exchange central to the formation of global trade patterns in the accumulation of capital. Design policies are therefore integral to debates about national economic and social development, just as design philosophies and values on individual and group levels shape our reflections on how we might live (Margolin, Buchanan, An Idea of Design: A Design Issues Reader, Introduction, 1995).

This is a fine example of how deep design should go on a cultural level. It does not just happen on the surface; it affects us on several different layers and makes an impact on the global economy. This shows how much power individuals have on design in our culture.

**Summary of Literature**

To summarize this literature review, one has asked what is design and interior design; definitions have been founds and meanings identified. One can go by the organization's definition of these terms, as well, and discern the general sense of connection and the concise connection. One can continue to "split the semantic hair" by defining what is *good* or *bad* in design. This does give us the information needed to determine from where these terms came

and in what context they were used. By doing this, it has helped to differentiate how the uses of these terms have changed over time and how they are applied in different contexts. Attached to the definitions are adjectives, which can be used to establish exactly what they mean, and how these adjectives have changed through time.

This review indicates how perceptions of good design (and the corresponding descriptive terms) have been integrated throughout history by different designers, from Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn, Ray and Charles Eames, Raymond Loewy, Michael Graves, Phillippe Starck, Steven Holl, and Terance Conran. Through time, these designers have established a general, philosophical sense of "Good Design," but this philosophy has been continuously controversial throughout history. There has always been the determination to re-define the term "good design" in each instance.

William Morris, an illustrator of the late nineteenth century, whose original works included wallpaper and furniture coverings, formulated what he called his "Golden Rule" over a century ago. "Have nothing in your houses, which you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful." He was, by no means, the first or last person to express such ideas. Beauty and utility were the twin notions to which the classical designers and architects of the 18$^{th}$ century subscribed. They, in turn, based their definition of "Good Design" on much more ancient formulas and writings of the first century A.D. Vitruvius advised that commodity, firmness, and delight were the fundamental qualities of good architecture.

Today, these can be translated as fitness of purpose, structural integrity, and delight. However, beauty remains specifically in the eye of the beholder. Conran's view of "Good

Design" is function and practicality, fitness of material, and form for use. The first thing that Conran looks for in design is excitement, or when something "touches a chord." He seeks for it to re-awaken the memory and please the eye. "This amorphisis aesthetics spiritual dimension is just as essential to life as shelter and food. It simply makes life worth living" (Conran, Terence Conran on Design, 1996).

Louis Kahn believed that there is no such thing as architecture. "There is the spirit of architecture, but it has no presence. What does have presence is a work of architecture." The author believes that this can be applied to good design, and that there really is no such thing as good design, just the spirit of good design.

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

A questionnaire, using a modified Delphi Technique, was used to conduct this study. Upon university human subjects approval, (see Appendix "A" SIGNED HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORM) the study was conducted over a six-month period, starting in April of 2002 and ending in September of 2002. All respondent information remains confidential, and only the author who administered the questionnaire has knowledge of their respective answers.

## Delphi Technique

Before proceeding with a summary of the study, it is appropriate to define the Delphi Technique and how it was modified by the author for purposes of conducting the study. The Delphi Technique is a methodology requiring a group consensus of expert opinion (Helmer, The Delphi Method for Systematizing Judgments about the Future: Institute of Government Affairs, 1996). It was designed to generate a group consensus while minimizing four specific disadvantages common to group discussions: 1) the effect of majority opinion, 2) the power of a persuasive or prestigious individual to shape group opinion, 3) vulnerability of group dynamics to manipulation, and 4) the unwillingness of individuals to abandon publicly stated positions (Isaac, Michael, Handbook in Research and Evaluation, 1997).

The traditional approach used with this methodology is a round table discussion. Panel members are asked to discuss a particular question or topic until they reach a consensus. A

second round of discussions focuses on another question or topic related to the first. After each iterative round, panel members provide some form of feedback in which the panel member is asked to re-evaluate their responses to the previous round (Isaac, Michael, Handbook in Research and Evaluation, 1997). In more recent applications of the technique each member of a panel receives a mailed, electronically mailed, or an on-line interactive computer questionnaire that is administered in an iterative fashion.

The Delphi Technique identifies the group population, who generates a consensus position but interacts with the individual to provide collective feedback of the emerging consensus to each member privately. In the second round, individuals then are given the opportunity to reconsider their initial position in light of the group trends and make any adjustments felt to be appropriate. The final result is an informed consensus insulated from the forces of face to face group interaction (Isaac, Michael, Handbook in Research and Evaluation, 1997).

For this study the author modified the Delphi methodology to address the problem of getting the desired respondents in one location. This was accomplished by developing a questionnaire for each respondent to answer specific questions about "Good Design" through Postal delivery in the first round and an interview process in the second round.

**Assumptions**

The sample selected to respond to the questionnaire possess the expertise representative of the target population. The selected sample participants responded honestly with their

genuine thoughts and opinions.

**Limitations**

The participants' understanding of the author's questionnaire is subject to the participants' understanding. This becomes a limitation because the participant might understand the questionnaire differently than the manner in which the author wanted it to be understood. Likewise, participant feedback, whether written or oral, is subject to the author's interpretation. This becomes a limitation because what the author understood may vary from what the participant intended to be understood.

By modifying the Delphi Technique for this study, the advantage of face-to-face, round-table discussion was eliminated. Although the author substituted this lack of information exchange by providing input from other participants during each individual participant phone interview, this is seen as a limitation because the information was relayed second-hand by the author and so was subject to interpretation (refer to the previous limitation). This is also seen as a limitation because the feedback provided by each individual was not provided in the context of a round-table meeting thereby preventing other participants from experiencing voice tone, body language and other contextual aspects which might have had an effect on a participant responses.

**Delimitations**

This study is limited to responses of the representatives who are considered experts in

their field based on the parameters set by *Interior Design* magazines "Hall of Fame" and *Architectural Digests* "Legends" list for the year 2000. Of the one hundred sixty-nine names listed, forty-three were excluded from this study as they were based internationally (outside the United States).

The study focuses specifically on interior design practitioners. The study leaves out Interior Design scholars, authors, historians, and students in order to achieve the greatest variance between groups. A concentrated area for evaluation could be formed to define a stronger and more concise definition or a common link within the desired group.

**Sample Population Employed**

The population for this study consisted of one hundred sixty-nine subject matter experts identified by their inclusion in *Interior Design* magazine's "Hall of Fame" members shown in the January 2001 issue (see Appendix "B", POPULATION) and *Architectural Digest's* "Legends" members shown in the September 2001 issue (see Appendix "B", POPULATION). These two publications are recognized by various design professions as respected industry magazines.

**Data Collection Procedure and Instrumentation**

The instrument of data collection was a questionnaire consisting of two questions. The first question (A) asked respondents to list the ten principles they believe represented "Good Design", inclusive of their own brief definition for each principle. This question allowed the respondents to state their answers in their own words. The second question (B) asked the

respondents to select one principle from their own list that they thought was most important to "Good Design." This question was asked in order to determine a level of hierarchy among all the answers (principles) through popular opinion (see Appendix "C", QUESTIONNAIRE).

Contact of the sample was initiated first through a postcard, notifying the subject a questionnaire package would be mailed shortly through the U.S. Postal Service. The questionnaire package was mailed two weeks after the initial postcard and included a cover letter/letter of intent, informational article (Ten Principles for a Good Design, by Dieter Rams), confidentiality statement, and questionnaire (see Appendix "D". REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION LETTERS).

The second round or iterative round, which followed two weeks after sending the first questionnaire packet, consisted of a follow-up telephone call to answer any questions regarding the survey, to confirm acceptance of participation in the study, and to give the option to respond verbally to the questionnaire. If the respondent had already responded to the questionnaire, they were given the chance to change their answers based on the results of the previous round.

A pilot study was conducted first to identify any unanticipated problems that the method and instrument of data collection might have. Based on the results of the pilot, the final study was conducted. The pilot and final studies were conducted as follows.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was used as an instrument to achieve a greater response for the actual questionnaire (Dillman, Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method, 2000). In the pilot study, questionnaires were sent out to Twenty-five subjects randomly selected from an expert population of one hundred twenty-six.

Four people of the twenty-five responded to the pilot. Of the four people that responded, one questionnaire was partially completed. A fifth response specifically indicated that the questionnaire would take too much time and therefore, declined to respond. Follow-up phone calls indicated similar responses. Therefore, the author modified the questionnaire to maximize the amount of information retrieved while shortening the time it would take for the subject to complete the questionnaire.

The pilot questionnaire was successful in that it provided enough information to revise the methodology of the final study and the format of the final questionnaire.

**Final Study**

With the following exception, the procedure used to deliver the final questionnaire was the same as the procedure used to deliver the pilot study questionnaire. In exception, it was decided to include an article listing Rams' ten principles. This was done because pilot respondents indicated that the questionnaire was taking too much time to complete. It was thought that including Rams' principles in the final study would provide a basis from which the respondents could more quickly determine their own principles.

The sample consisted of a group of seventy-five randomly selected participants. This group was subdivided into three smaller groups labeled: Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3. A staggered approach was used in administering the questionnaire and follow-up interviews. Group 1 questionnaires were sent first to each of the twenty-five participants. These were followed two weeks later by a telephone interview, conducted by the author, with each individual participant. Group 2 questionnaires were sent during the same week that Group 1 interviews were being conducted, with follow-up interviews for Group 2 taking place two weeks later. Group 3 questionnaires were sent during the same week that Group 2 interviews were being conducted with follow-up interviews taking place two weeks later (see Appendix "E". STAGGERED QUESTIONNAIRE DELIVERY).

Delphi participants were asked to respond to an open-ended question to identify a core term. The author served as the Delphi moderator. The second-round Delphi proportionate sample of seventy-five participants represented the subject expert's professional area as identified within the core area. A questionnaire for seventy-five participants with three open-ended questions would result in two hundred twenty-five potential responses. Also, 75 people randomly selected represents more than 50% of the total population. Any sample of 50% of the population or higher is a highly representative sample of the selected population (Dillman, Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method, 2000).

Upon completion of the interview, the information provided was tabulated and sorted according to common responses (see Appendix "F". RAW DATA, TABLE 1, 2, 3). An additional letter of appreciation was sent to all participating respondents. If the respondent

declined to participate in the study, the response was noted as a "No Response" answer for the participant in the tabulation, and the study continued.

**Validation of Instrumentation**

The author achieved credibility of information gathered by ensuring that addresses received for all participants were from a valid source. As previously indicated, these sources included two highly respected industry publications, *Interior Design*, and *Architectural Digest*. Additionally, the author later had direct contact with each individual respondent via telephone interview, as previously indicated. Credibility was also achieved by subdividing the sample group of seventy-five into three groups of Twenty-five. This was done in order to control administration of the questionnaire and accuracy of handling the results

A questionnaire was an appropriate choice for this study because of the difficulty of bringing the population together for a round table discussion due to scheduling conflicts, time, geographic distance and expense. The questionnaire was easy to administer, relatively quick to answer, and the information gained suited the type of response desired by the author.

**Findings**

Of the total subjects sent questionnaires, 41% responded (see Appendix "F" RAW DATA, SURVEY RESPONSE RATE). Based on Dillman, this represents a significant response rate from which to draw conclusions. The author analyzed, through common response, the responses to each question more closely. In question "A", the subjects were asked to use one word to indicate the most important principle of good design. The results showed that there

was no hierarchical value to any of these principles described: Integrity, Enhances, Appropriateness, and Innovative. Some of the other principles that did not receive a high response rate were: Suitability, Timeless, Confidence, Style, Balance, Thorough, Functional, Responsible, Clarity, and Simple (refer to the results of Question "A", later in this chapter).

In evaluating question "B", the author specifically referred to Dieter Rams' ten principles for good design and asked the respondents to indicate which three were the most important principles in determining good design. The author categorized each rank position, with one being the most important (refer to the results of Question "B" Analysis-Compiled, later in this section). The author also took this analysis one step further by compiling the responses to question "B" by raking of importance, and tabulating a rank of the total responses for all principles from all rankings (refer to the result of Question "B" Analysis, Compiled and Tabulated, later in this section).

**Responses to Question "A" – Results**[†]

In one word provide what you think is the most important principle of "Good Design"?

Suitability
Integrity [2]
Timeless
Confidence
Style
*Enhances [2]
Appropriateness [2]
Balance
*Innovative [2]
Thorough
Function
Responsibility
Clarity
*Simple

* Indicates principles from Dieter Rams

[†]Note on interpretation: This list shows all the one-word principles that the respondents considered to be the most important principle of good design. Note that Integrity, Enhances, Appropriateness, and Innovative were considered most important by more than one respondent.

**Responses to Question "B" Analysis – Raw Data**[†]

From the list of principles outlined by Dieter Rams, rank what you think are the top 3 most Principles in determining "Good Design"?

| **One** (1st most important) | **Two** (2nd most important) | **Three** (3rd most important) |
|---|---|---|
| *Innovative | *Aesthetics | *Honest |
| *Enduring | Consistent | *Simple |
| Ethical** | Accomplishing** | Faith** |
| *Enhances | Unobtrusive | *Simple |
| *Enhances | *Honest | *Understandable |
| *Innovative | *Enhances | *Environmentally Friendly |
| *Aesthetics | *Enhances | *Understandable |
| *Innovative | *Honest | *Aesthetics |
| *Innovative | *Enhances | *Understandable |
| *Understandable | *Aesthetics | *Innovative |
| *Enhances | *Aesthetics | *Understandable |
| *Enhances | *Understandable | *Aesthetics |
| *Environmentally Friendly | *Enduring | Consistent |
| *Innovative | *Aesthetics | *Environmentally Friendly |
| *Enhances | *Understandable | *Simple |
| *Simple | *Honest | *Innovative |
| *Honest | *Understandable | *Innovative |
| Elegance** | Poetic** | Serenity** |

* Indicates principles from Dieter Rams

** Subject inserted own top three most important principles

[†]Note on interpretation: This table shows the raw data prior to analysis. From the first column, Innovative is ranked most important by five different respondents. From the second column, Aesthetics is ranked second most important by four different respondents, etc.

**Question "B" Analysis – Complied**[†]

Compiled responses for each ranking of importance 1,2,3.

| **One** (1st most important) | **Two**(2nd most important) | **Three** (3rd most important) |
|---|---|---|
| *Innovative (5) | *Aesthetics (4) | *Understandable (4) |
| *Enhances (5) | *Honest (3) | *Simple (3) |
| *Enduring (1) | *Enhances (3) | *Innovative (3) |
| Ethical (1) | *Understandable (3) | *Environmentally Friendly (2) |
| *Aesthetics (1) | Consistent (1) | *Aesthetics (2) |
| *Understandable (1) | Accomplishing (1) | *Honest (1) |
| *Environmentally Friendly (1) | *Unobtrusive (1) | Faith (1) |
| *Simple (1) | *Enduring (1) | Consistent (1) |
| *Honest (1) | Poetic (1) | Serenity (1) |
| Elegance (1) | | |

* Indicates principles from Dieter Rams

[†]Note on interpretation: This table shows that five respondents ranked Innovative and Enhances as the most important principle; four respondents ranked Aesthetics as the second most important principle; and four respondents ranked Understandable as the third most important principle, etc.

## Question "B" Analysis - Tabulated†

Most common responses, as tabulated from all three rankings.

*Innovative (8)
*Enhances (8)
*Understandable (8)
*Aesthetics (7)
*Honest (5)
*Simple (4)
*Environmentally Friendly (3)
*Enduring (3)
Consistent (2)
Ethical (1)
Accomplishing (1)
*Unobtrusive (1)
Faith (1)
Elegance (1)
Poetic (1)
Serenity (1)

- Indicates principles from Dieter Rams

†Note on interpretation: This table shows combined frequency from all three rankings. Innovative, Enhances, and Understandable appears eight times, regardless of rank. Aesthetics appears seven times, regardless of rank, etc.

# CONCLUSIONS

## Discussion of Findings

As an introduction to the summary of conclusions, it warrants some time to identify several points of discussion, resulting from both the literature review and the study results. Although none of these points impact the conclusions of this study, they are of interest because they cause one to continue to question what good design is. In addition, these points lead one to additional areas of future research.

The literature review revealed a wealth of design-related history and experience. It can be assumed that Rams drew on his own experience, and in part, such history, to formulate his Ten Principles for Good Design in the 1990's. When initial research was completed for this study, it was surprising to find that no relevant information (outside of Rams' principle itself) was found regarding the design element, Enhancing. Yet, Enhancing was rated well by the respondents of the questionnaire. When one considers that Rams' other principles could be related, in one way or another, to many of the elements and principles of good design brought out in the literature review, one wonders why Enhancing, as an element or principle of design, seems to be ignored in writing.

Given this perplexing situation, the author conducted a second search of literature in hopes of finding something relevant to the topic of Enhancing. The second search did not reveal anything of substance, which led the author to this point of discussion. It is thought that there exists this lacking of written information about Enhancing, as a principle or

element of good design, because Enhancing is no more than a process of increasing or improving in value, quality, desirability, or attractiveness (Merriam-Webster, 2000). To enhance something implies that something must already exist, whether conceptually or physically. Unless one is to consider the design aspects of refurbishment (a topic this literature review did not cover), it is difficult to consider Enhancing an element or principle of design. Perhaps this can be attributed to the lacking written information on the topic.

One is left then only to hypothesize why Rams chose "Enhancing" as one of his ten principles. Perhaps he is implying enhancement of a previous design. Perhaps he is implying provision of a design that enhances original expectations. Perhaps he uses it simply as a term that embellishes a particular theme. Regardless of his reasoning, this remains a common element or principle of design between Rams and many other high-profile designers.

Ethically, we can look at different rules that apply to using responsible materials and being sustainable in designing. These are considered some of the more important issues now, in 2003. These issues affect how designers think, which is what this research attempted to establish. Ethics also pertains to the responsibility designers have with their clients. It has been determined that there are social and fiduciary responsibilities of the designer: the efficacy of safe products, protection of biosphere, sustainable design, the use of natural resources, reduction of waste and increased recycling, wise use of energy, reduction of risk, shared information, as well as legal and contractual agreements. These are very important because their pertinence in application will be either positive or negative toward the effects of "good design". The author submits that Ethics is less a principle of design and more a

moral responsibility to be followed.

Our culture has been inundated with marketing and the selling of "high style" or "good design". The effects of this mass marketing have made an impact on the consumer to judge products and spaces on the surface, i.e., aesthetics, and not so much on function, quality of materials, etc. Culturally, does this justify the idea that good design is simply the quality of life? Is good design as simple as experiencing a phenomenological experience? These questions seem relevant to this discussion but in all probability may never be answered.

As a final point of discussion, the author wishes to point out that at first look, the results of Question "B" Analysis – Tabulated could be misinterpreted because they appear to be the top three principles of importance. However, at closer look, they represent less than half of the total responses. In actuality, fifty-six percent of the participants responded differently.

**Summary of conclusions**

In conclusion, one has asked what is "Good Design" and one has narrowed down and defined each principle of design. This did not produce a precise definition for what constitutes good design. In fact, it seemed to only broaden the term because each time it was re-defined, there were new principles added to the morphed definition.

The analysis has revealed a wide spectrum of opinions through published views and through a questionnaire and interviews of designers. This information continues to support and drive the never-ending question of what is good design. Ethics on a whole is believed to be more of an element that should be practiced by designers, regardless of their views on

good design than an actual principle of design. What is inevitable, however, is how design affects our culture and how our culture affects design. This is evidence of an interaction that our culture has with designed products and spaces. This interaction has several variables that warrant analysis, which is itself a different research project. It is the author's belief that there is a simple, straightforward definition to this question: good design should affect the quality of life that each individual has emotionally. What the findings really do not focus on is the emotional connection that design might have on/with an individual.

The content analysis indicates, from a designer's perspective, that there is no hierarchical value to any one principle of design. But there are principles that together indicate a level of importance, i.e., Integrity, Enhances, Appropriateness, and Innovative. While other principles did not seem to indicate much importance as a common response, i.e. Suitability, Timeless, Confidence, Style, Balance, Thorough, Function, Responsible, Clarity, and Simple. This indicates that these principles were important at this place in time; what it fails to substantiate is changes in our environment such as ecological, economic, or sociological impacts.

In taking into consideration Dieter Rams', Ten Principles for a Good Design, the author realized that there was no consistent agreement in what the subjects thought of as the three most important principles in determining "Good Design". The results do show as a whole that Innovative, Enhances, Understandable, Aesthetics, Honest, Simple, Environmentally Friendly, Enduring, Consistent, were the hierarchical order to which the subjects responded .

One of the goals of this research is to bring more awareness to the design industry and

our culture about design and its philosophical beliefs. The author believes that this was achieved through the unpredictable interest that the subjects had on this topic, as well as through the production of the questionnaire and the publishing of the results. It is also believed by the author that the term "Good Design" has, to some degree, discredited design in the eyes of the public. It suggests exclusivity of a remote social class, it suggests pretentiousness. While there still may be excellence in design, it is believed that it is achieved by touching the individual emotionally. The individual must have an attachment to a design through a phenomenological experience that strikes a chord from within to have a personal connection with a designed product or space. This experience may include texture, function, style, movement, color, light, pattern, form, proportion, rhythm, unity, harmony, innovative, enhances, aesthetics, understandable, unobtrusive, honest, sustainable, minimal, enduring, consistent, ethical, accomplishing, faith, and appropriateness.

In researching this term, it has been established that it has been the designer who has given the term "Good Design" a bad name. The confusion comes into play when the adjective *good* was pulled from universal vocabulary and placed in conjunction with the word *design*, in order to give it extra validity, or exclusivity in the market place.

As a final thought, it is believed that beyond the prescribed adjective of terms, which are created by designers, there can be an emotional connection to a design, which gives it the most substantial definition to what good design is.

**Future Research**

The conclusions established by the author indicate that the closest definition to the term "Good Design" is something an individual experiences through an emotional connection with a product or space that consists of a phenomenological experience that one has. Because this research focuses primarily on high profile designers from within the interior design industry, it left out the opinions from interior design educators/scholars, historians, and students. It also left out international interior design practitioners, educators/scholars, historians, and students. The author's analysis, even though there has been a conclusion developed from this research, is a partial answer to a big question, which has plagued the design community. It is just as important to establish answers from these other groups in order to develop fully a precise conclusion for this question. Future research is dependent on administering a study to these additional groups and providing an analysis of the variance between each group in order to develop a final conclusion.

# APPENDIX A. SIGNED HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORM

| OFFICE USE ONLY | | |
|---|---|---|
| Project ID# 02-218 | Project Category: _____ | IRB Approval Date: _____ |
| Oracle ID# _____ | Key Personnel Training: Complete | IRB Expiration Date: _____ |

# Iowa State University
## Human Subjects Review Form

IRB
JAN 2 6 2002

(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project: "Good Design" An Analysis of the Term as it Relates to the Interior Design Industry

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree that all key personnel involved in conducting human subjects research will receive training in the protection of human subjects. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

Robert X. Franco — Typed name of principal investigator
04/04/2001 — Date
Signature of principal investigator

Art/Design — Department
College of Design 158 — Campus Address

402-556-5385 rxfranco@iastate.edu — Phone number and email

2a. Principal investigator
☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Postdoctoral ☒ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student

3. Typed name of co-principal investigator(s) — Date — Signature of co-principal investigator(s)

None

3a. Co-Principal investigator(s) (check all that apply)
☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Postdoctoral ☐ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student

3b. Typed name of major professor or supervisor (if not a co-principal investigator) — Date — Signature of major professor or supervising faculty member

Cigdem Akkurt — 04-04-01

4. Typed names of other key personnel who will directly interact with human subjects.
None

5. Project (check all that apply)
☐ Research ☒ Thesis or dissertation ☐ Class project ☐ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)
20 # adults, non-students ____ # ISU students ____ # minors under 14 ____ # minors 14-17 ____ # other (explain)

7. Status of project submission through Office of Sponsored Programs Administration (check one)
☐ Has been submitted ☐ Will be submitted ☒ Will not be submitted

7a. Funding Source: private

8. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, item 8. Use an additional page if needed.) **(Include one copy of the complete proposal if submitting to a Federal sponsor.)**

A three step interveiw process will be conducted involving 20 professional interior designers as subjects consisting of an initial introduction, interview, and follow-up.

9. Informed Consent: ☐ Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)
☒ Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

10. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods you will use to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 10.)

Verbal confidentiality statement before proceeding with interview and written confidentiality statement on written introduction.

11. Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 11.)

No risk or discomfort will be placed on subjects.

12. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:

☐ A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
☐ B. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
☐ C. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
☐ D. Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
☐ E. Administration of infectious agents or recombinant DNA
☐ F. Application of external stimuli
☐ G. Application of noxious or potentially noxious stimuli
☐ H. Deception of subjects
☐ I. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or
☐ Subjects 14-17 years of age
☐ J. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, mental health facilities, prisons, etc.)
☐ K. Pregnant women
☐ L. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in 12, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

Items A-G Describe the procedures and note the proposed safety precautions.

Items D-E The principal investigator should send a copy of this form to Environmental Health and Safety, 118 Agronomy Lab for review.

Item H Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

Item I For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent will be obtained from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects.

Items J-K Explain what actions would be taken to insure minimal risk.

Item L Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Research and Advanced Studies
Office of the Vice Provost
211 Beardshear Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2036
515 294-6344
Fax 294-6100

September 26, 2000

This is to certify that **ROBERT FRANCO** attended an Iowa State University workshop on September 19, 2000 regarding the protection of human subjects in research.

The workshop covered the following topics:

- the historical perspectives of human subjects research
- The Belmont Report
- the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50&56)
- assurances of compliance
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) composition and duties
- elements of informed consent
- IRB review process
- modification of research activities and unanticipated problems
- issues in behavioral and social science research
- Iowa State University policies and procedures

In addition, attendees were provided a copy of The Belmont Report and the Iowa State University Multiple Project Assurance filed with the Office for Human Research Protections. They were also given information on the resources available on the World Wide Web.

Patricia M. Keith
IRB Chair

Prem S. Paul
Associate Vice Provost for Research &
Institutional Official Responsible for
Human Subjects Research

# APPENDIX B. POPULATION

## Architectural Digest 2000 Legends

Marc Appleton

Barbara Barry

Karin Blake

Samuel Botera

Geoffrey Bradfield

Bray-Schaible

Diane Burn

Nina Campbel

Marc Charoinnet

Michael Christiano

Sibyl Colefax

John Fowler

John Cottrell

Savin Couelle

Robert Couturier

Elissa Cullman

Joanne De Guardiola

Alain Demachy

Robert Denning

Thomas Fleming

Jacques Garcia

William T. Georgis

Peter M. Gluck

Mariette Himes Gomez

Alexander Gorlin

Graham Gund

Victoria Hagan

Nicholas Haslam

Cecil N. Hayes

Thad Hayes

Hilary Heminway

Anouska Hempel

Hendrix/Allardyce

William Hodgins

Terry Hunziker

Ike Kligerman Barkley

Hugh Newell Jacobsen

Greg Jordan

Robert Kime

Richard Landry

Ricardo Legorreta

Mimi London

Loyd-Paxton

M Group

James Magni

Ron Mann

McMillen, Inc.

Mary Meehan

Juan Pablo Molyneux

Moore Ruble Yudell

Mickey Muennig

Philippe B. Oates

Roberto Peregalli

Thomas Pheasant

Nancy Pierrepont

Duart4 Pinto Coelho

Campion A. Platt

Bart Prince

Jaquelin T. Robertson

Serge Robin

Serge Royaux

Renny B. Saltzman

Harry Schnaper

Annabelle Selldorf

Stephen Shadley

Shelton Mindel

Shope Reno Wharton

Marjorie Shushan

Sissl Huniford

John Stefandis

Seth Stein

Edward Tuttle

Axel Vervoordt

Verde Viscontia

Alan Wanzenberg

Victoria Waymouth

Ron Wilson

Craig Wright

Larry Yaw

## Interior Design Magazine 2000 Hall of Fame

Marvin Affrime

Kalef Alaton

Davis Allen

Pamela Babey

Benjamin Baldwin

Louis M.S. Beal

Maria Bergson

Laura Bohn

Joseph Braswell

Robert Bray

Don Brinkman

Tom Britt

R. Scott Bromley

Denise Scott Brown

Mario Buatta

Richard Carlson

Francois Catroux

Steve Chase

Rita st. Clair

Clodagh

Robert Currie

Joseph D' Urso

Thierry W. Despont

Orlando Diaz-Azcuy

Jack Dunbar

Melvin Dwork

David Easton

Henry End

Mica Ertegun

Billy Francis

Neil Frankel

Arthur Gensler

Mariette Himes Gomez

Jacques Grange

Margo Grant

Bruce Gregga

Albert Hadley

Anthony Hall

Antony Harbor

Hugh Hardy

Edith Mansfield Hills

Richard Himmel

Howard Hirsch

William Hodgins

Malcolm Holtzman

Carolyn Hu

Eva Jirinca

Robert Kleinschmidt

Ronald Krueck

Gary Lee

Maomi Leff

Joseph Lembo

Lawrence Lerner

Neville Lewis

Sally Sirkin Lewis

Eva Maddox

Stephen Mallory

Peter Marino

Patrick McConnell

Margaret McCurry

Kevin McNamara

Lee Mindel

Juan Montoya

Frank Nicholson

Norman Pfeiffer

Donald D. Powell

William Pulgram

Andree Putman

Chessy Raynor

John Saladino

Michael Schnable

Peter Shelton

Betty Sherrill

Debra Lehman Smith

Ethel Smith

Andre Staffelbach

Phillippe Starck

Rysia Suchecka

Lou Switzer

Rose Tarlow

Adam Tihany

Billie Tsien

Carlton Varney

Kenneth Walker

Sally Walsh

Kevin Walz

Bunny Williams

Tod Williams

Trisha Wilson

Vincente Wolf

Celeste Cooper

# APPENDIX C. QUESTIONNAIRE

# FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

## Questionnaire

**"Good Design" An Analysis of the Term as it Applies to the Interior Design Industry**

A) In one word, provide what you think is the **most important principle** of "Good Design"? Your word may be of your own or, one of Dieter Rams' principles. Please include a brief definition.

B) From the list of principles outlined by Dieter Rams, rank what you think are the **top three** most principles in determining "Good Design"?

Please respond prior to **September 14, 2002** to:

**Robert Franco**
**Iowa State University**
**College of Design 158**
**Ames, IA 50011-3092**

You may also submit your response via electronic mail: **rxfranco@iastate.edu**

Response to this survey implies informed consent.

**Thank you for participating in this study.**

# PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

## Questionnaire

**"Good Design" An Analysis of the Term as it Applies to the Interior Design Industry**

A) List below ten principles that you believe represents "Good Design". In addition, include a brief definition for each principle.

B) From the list above, which is the most important principle that represents "Good Design"?

Please respond prior to **September 14, 2002** to:

**Robert Franco**
**Iowa State University**
**College of Design 158**
**Ames, IA 50011-3092**

You may also submit your response via electronic mail: **rxfranco@iastate.edu**

Response to this survey implies informed consent.

**Thank you for participating in this study.**

# APPENDIX D. REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION LETTERS

Dear Mr. Franco,

Please accept this invitation to participate in my study. Because you were selected as one of the top designers by Interior Design Magazine, your opinion is respected in the interior design industry.

A packet will be sent to you in the next seven days. It will provide you with the details of the study that you are being requested to participate in.

Please be aware of this packet and respond to it no later than **August 15, 2002.**

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Robert X. Franco

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**
**OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**
Department of Art and Design
Robert X. Franco
College of Design 158
Ames, Iowa 50011-3092
515 294-6724
FAX 515 294-2725

Robert Franco
134E University Village
Ames, IA 50010

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Department of Art and Design
College of Design
Ames, Iowa 50011-3092
515 294-6724
FAX 515 294-2725

Robert Franco
134 E University Village
Ames, IA 50010

August 1, 2002

Dear Mr. Franco,

Because you have been selected as one of the top designers through *Interior Design Magazines* Top Designers for 2001, you have been selected to participate in a study that analyzes the term "Good Design". Since you have been honored with being a recipient of this prestigious award, you represent the opinions of the design profession.

My name is Robert Franco; I am a graduate student working on my Master of Fine Art degree at Iowa State University. As partial fulfillment of the degree, I am conducting a survey of opinions on the term of "Good Design". In order fulfill this requirement; I will need your expert opinion in order to complete my research. The enclosed survey has been created to gather responses that will provide me with information on the term "Good Design". I understand your time is valuable, for this reason, I have designed this study to take the least amount of your time as possible, between 15 to 30 minutes.

I would appreciate your kind support by reviewing the enclosed documents carefully and responding to the study prior to **August 15, 2002.** Please take your time and ask any questions prior to completing the survey. All questions, comments and/or concerns should be directed to my attention at the above address or through electronic mail at rxfranco@iastate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Robert X. Franco

Dear Mr. Franco,

Please accept this invitation to participate in my study. Because you were selected as one of the top designers by Interior Design Magazine, your opinion is respected in the interior design industry.

A packet will be sent to you in the next seven days. It will provide you with the details of the study that you are being requested to participate in.

Please be aware of this packet and respond to it no later than **September 15, 2002**.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Robert X. Franco

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**
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Robert Franco
134E University Village
Ames, IA 50010

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Department of Art and Design
College of Design 158
Ames, Iowa 50011-3092
515 294-6724
FAX 515 294-2725

Robert Franco
134E University Village
Ames, IA 50010

September 9, 2002

Dear Mr. Franco,

Because you have been identified as one of the top designers through *Architectural Digest Magazines* Legends 2000, you have been selected to participate in a study that analyzes the term "Good Design". Since you have been honor with this prestigious award, you represent the opinions of the design profession.

My name is Robert Franco, I am a graduate student working on my Master of Fine Art degree at Iowa State University. As partial fulfillment of the degree, I am conducting a survey of opinions on the term "Good Design". In order to fulfill this requirement, I will need your expert opinion in order to complete my research. The enclosed survey has been created to gather responses that will provide me with information on the term "Good Design". I understand your time is valuable, for this reason, I have designed this study to take the least amount of your time as possible, between 15 to 30 minutes.

I would appreciate your kind support in reviewing the enclosed documents carefully and responding to the study prior to **September 14, 2002**. Please take your time and ask any questions prior to completing the survey. All questions, comments and/or concerns should be directed to my attention at the above address or through electronic mail at rxfranco@iastate.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Robert X. Franco

Dear Mr. Franco,

Thank you for your assistance in participating in my questionnaire. As you probably know, it is very difficult to achieve a high response rate for a survey, your cooperation will help to analyze the term "Good Design" so that we, as designers, are able to communicate more effectively with one and other.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like a summary of the results at rxfranco@iastate.edu.

Once again thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Robert X. Franco

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**
**OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**
Department of Art and Design
Robert X. Franco
College of Design 158
Ames, Iowa 50011-3092
515 294-6724
FAX 515 294-2725

Robert Franco
134E University Village
Ames, IA 50010

## Informed Consent

**"Good Design" An Analysis of the term as it Applies to the Interior Design Industry**

Taking part in this study affords you the opportunity to respond to the article, Ten Principles for a Good Design, by Dieter Rams. After reading the article, which has been included for your convenience, please do the following:

1) In one word, provide what you think is the most important principle of "Good Design"? Your word may be the same as any of Dieter Rams' or you may list one of your own. Please include a brief definition for this principle.

2) From the list of principles outlined by Dieter Rams, Rank what you think are the top three most principles in determining "Good Design".

You will be contact by telephone by **August 15, 2002**, in order to collect your responses in a timely manner and not to waste your valuable time you may respond immediately through electronic mail by submitting your response to rxfranco@iastate.edu, and by putting the word ***survey*** in the subject field, or by returning through postal delivery to:

Robert Franco
Iowa State University
College of Design 158
Ames, IA 50011-3092

The survey should take about 20 minutes to review the information, 10 minutes to respond to the survey. Please be honest and specific in your response. If need be, you may need to be contacted to clarify your response.

There is no risk in participating in this study. All responses will be kept confidential. Your name will be used to identify your response, but will not be used in the written format of the thesis. The list published by *Interior Design Magazine* and *Architectural Digest* magazines with your name included, will be part of the appendix, but will not be connected to any information provided. All responses will be kept confidential until the completion of the research project. Upon completion of the research project, all responses will be destroyed with the identifier attached. All responses will be evaluated and analyzed by the investigator and/or the investigators staff in order to determine frequency. If respondent replies via electronic mail, all responses will be through cryptic coding for confidentiality.

Throughout the duration of this survey, the subject reserves the right to withdraw from this study without affecting his/her current relationship with Iowa State University or its affiliate organizations. Subjects also have the right to withdraw from the study should new and/or significant information be made available. Response to this survey implies informed consent.

The researcher conducting this survey is Robert X. Franco, Jr. If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact Cigdem Akkurt, professor at 515-294-8978 or akkurt@iastate.edu.

**Ten Principles for a Good Design**
Dieter Rams

The following basic hypotheses act as a means of orientation for my colleagues, my students and myself:

According to these principles, design is a product advantage, which plays a decisive role in certain profitable and long-lasting marketing successes and facilitates entry into new markets. Worldwide we have still only few examples of this.
With obviously bad design, which is primarily directed at the cynical exploitation of human weakness, which is superficial, arbitrary and only for show, one is not likely to achieve enduring success. In more detail this means:

**1) Good Design is innovative.** Innovation is a catchword nowadays, which is often used to mean spectacular novelties, which can be limited to exterior changes in façade. Innovation thus becomes an end in itself. Design must be seen here to be the coordinating factor, as it is important that all the factors remain in balance throughout the long development process through which a product has to go. This does not mean that in the future all products must look like they do these days. Without sacrificing the design rules (but possibly by modifying them) the design of a product will reflect the present state-of-the-art in respect to technology, manufacturing and the necessity of using new materials.

**2) Good design enhances the usefulness of a product.** In my opinion, an appliance is well designed when it is of optimal use. Design according to the function of an appliance is a result of an intensive and comprehensive interaction with the reality of use, life, needs, wishes and feelings of humans. Design may not reduce people to machines. For instance, a chair certainly has many other functions with in a home than only be sat upon. This means then, the design of consumer goods should fulfill more functions than the primary one, e.g. psychological functions, or that it fits with the rest of the individual environment of the user. However, one can easily get lost in the search for complementary functions, the functions can become so extended that they cover the whole spectrum of every possible life style. In the design theory, this can be enacted in all its varying components. But in design, practice the designer has to decide with every product anew which functions one wants to take into consideration. There are no instant recipes for this. We must endeavor to sift out the relevant aspects by discussion with marketing, development and production teams, to reach a form, which successfully integrates complementary with primary functions. The important things in this process result from the picture we have of the people for whom we are designing this particular appliance. Products designed according to this principle differ from products, which are designed according to other principles for the same consumer.

**3) Good design is aesthetics,** because the aesthetics of a product and its fascination are intrinsic parts of its function and utility. All this spectacular modern kitsch gets on my nerves most!

**4) Good design is understandable.** It shows the product in a logical way. The quality of self-explanation is practically non-existent in a lot of products. They are more or less, 'design puzzles', which can hardly be solved without studying often frustrating use instructions.

**5) Good design is unobtrusive.** During the last few years, the meaning of design has become increasingly important. This is illustrated by the multitude of discussions on and around the subject. It also shows that industry has far greater difficulty attaining clear, important product advantages by means of the classical areas such as reasonable prices, special technological performance or high quality. In spite of the doubtless increase in importance, design has remained in the background up until now. One reason still for this outsider role is its problematic self-image. The central question is: is design art, applied art, or is it technology? With an eye to the future, there is only one answer in my opinion: industrial design is technology. A designer can only really design products after studying industrial design and with the necessary experience, competence and knowledge of the working methods. Everything else is only cosmetic. A technological performance is in increasing demand from the designer. Every design must be thought through and reliably

clarified in depth with all its construction, material and manufacturing requirements. 'Technology design'- the conceptionally well-founded, comprehensive, consistent and professional design from start to finish of products, is becoming ever more necessary, more valuable and more important. In my opinion, consumer appliances are not least tools and should remain so. They should be able to recede, leave people room for an individual, living environment. They are neither works of art nor cult objects, neither status symbols nor window dressing.

**6) Good design is honest**. People often complain that design too often attempts to cheat, i.e. to blind people to the real characteristics of a product, or at least to encourage the customer and user to self-deceit. In my opinion, designers have an educational task because he or she participates in the social and cultural development and cannot deny this responsibility.

**7/8/9) Good design is environmentally friendly, enduring and consistent**. These are about the responsibility which design has in creation of a human environment. Good design watches out for durability, precision and takes the environment into consideration in questions of material used and the maintenance required for a product. This idea of design is naturally in contrasts, for example, who see with those a Swatch-, the synthesis of a watch and non-watch- as liberation, namely the freedom to interchange or throw away. However, I do not believe in self-fulfillment through consuming and throwing away. Soon this will be an academic discussion anyway, as the protection of the environment forces us to look for long lasting solutions. The increasing importance of the protection of the environment, such as the effect of materials used or the considered use of energy and raw materials, is not with out influence on design. But I also mean the visual pollution. It has been my experience that this means a similar disturbance and impairment of our environment, as are for instance the pollution of the air, the soil, or water.

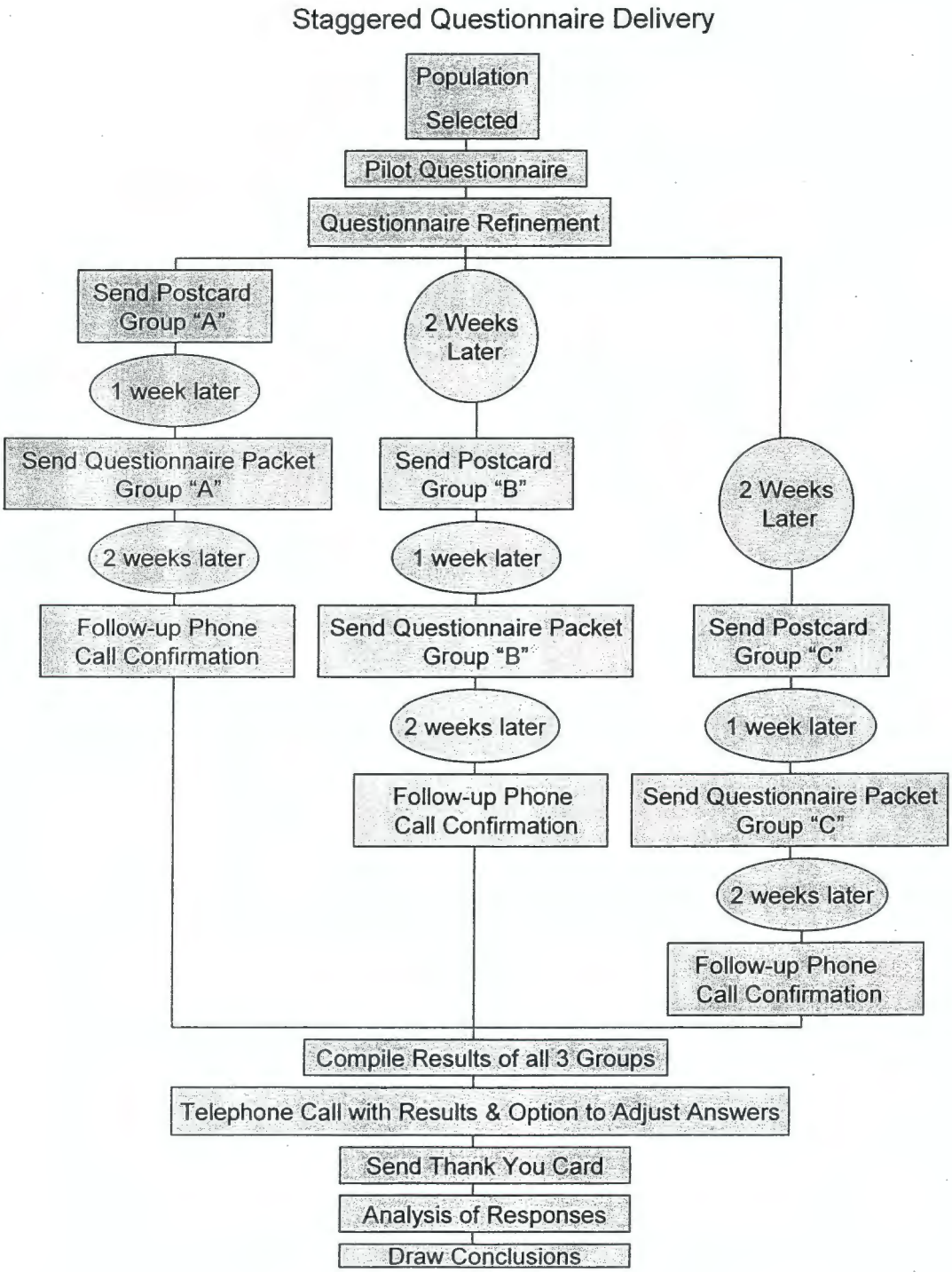
**10) Good design is as little design as possible**. Our only real chance is to return to simplicity. In my eyes, the most important design principle is to leave out everything, which is unimportant, and to thus highlight the important things. Simplicity in every respect. It is an important task- perhaps the most important on in a social sense- for the designer to help to reduce the chaos in which we are forced to live. The biggest design deficit is in my opinion in the basics. The freedom to reflect how we can make use of technical advances. Of course, there isn't a simple answer to this, but here the attempt is made to question the real use of the achievements of this highly technical work. Especially, with a view to everyday products, this means questioning whether a new product is necessary. Is the old product, which has proved itself still sufficient, or is an improvement reasonable?

We had grown used to the idea that a world is approaching in which technology will do everything for us and make it possible for humans to make mistakes without suffering the penalty. What we need is a much better understanding of technology. As this belief is most common in those people who confuse language with culture, we must consider where the lack of culture actually lies. True culture is not arrogant but modest and honest. But modesty is very difficult to find.

It has always been easier for us humans to imagine the negative than the positive. If you know Dante's Divine Comedy, you will agree with me when I say that the excerpts about Hell are much better than those about Heaven. The sum of mistakes, which are made without any necessity, is in deed great, and so many are avoidable. This is a field, which we can immediately cultivate and which could produce good harvest, if we really want it to. The question is how much do we want it to?

If we didn't pay so much attention to prefabricated opinions, prejudices, irrelevancies and gloomy fears, which seem rational, but are irrational when we contemplate decisions requiring reasoning and facts, things could be a great deal better. It is difficult to improve morals. But we would have taken a huge step forward if thinking could be improved. Design indeed is pre-eminently a thinking process.

# APPENDIX E. STAGGERED QUESTIONNAIRE DELIVERY


Staggered Questionnaire Delivery
Population Selected
Pilot Questionnaire
Questionnaire Refinement
Send Postcard Group "A"
1 week later
Send Questionnaire Packet Group "A"
2 weeks later
Follow-up Phone Call Confirmation
2 Weeks Later
Send Postcard Group "B"
1 week later
Send Questionnaire Packet Group "B"
2 weeks later
Follow-up Phone Call Confirmation
2 Weeks Later
Send Postcard Group "C"
1 week later
Send Questionnaire Packet Group "C"
2 weeks later
Follow-up Phone Call Confirmation
Compile Results of all 3 Groups
Telephone Call with Results & Option to Adjust Answers
Send Thank You Card
Analysis of Responses
Draw Conclusions

# APPENDIX F. RAW DATA

# Survey Response Rate

| Survey Responses | tot.population | tot. responses | percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| Group "A" | 25 | 16 | 64% |
| Group "B" | 28 | 11 | 39% |
| Group "C" | 21 | 4 | 19% |
| | | | |
| **Total Survey** | **75** | **31** | **41%** |

# Table 1 (Group "A")

| Group "A" | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subject** | **Respond** | **Decline** | **No Resonse** | **N/A** |
| | | | | |
| NP | | | x | |
| HS | 18-Aug | | | |
| SC | | | | x |
| JS | | | x | |
| HH | | x | | |
| SSL | 5-Sep | | | |
| OD | 15-Aug | | | |
| JD | 12-Aug | | | |
| WD | | | x | |
| LB | | x | | |
| CC | | | x | |
| HNJ | | x | | |
| JM | x | | | |
| TW | 9-Aug | | | |
| TH | | | x | |
| DLS | | | x | |
| DE | | x | | |
| BW | | x | | |
| RK | 20-Aug | | | |
| BG | x | | | |
| DP | 15-Aug | | | |
| LS | 16-Aug | | | |
| NL | | | x | |
| GL | 30-Aug | | | |
| GG | | | x | |

# Table 2 (Group "B")

| Group "B" | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subject** | **Respond** | **Decline** | **No Resonse** | **N/A** |
| | | | | |
| BT | 5-Sep | | | |
| AW | 30-Aug | | | |
| AT | 15-Aug | | | |
| LM | | | x | |
| RT | | | x | |
| GJ | | | x | |
| NF | 5-Sep | | x | |
| TP | | | x | |
| BB | | | x | |
| RC | 13-Aug | | | |
| VH | | | x | |
| RSB | | | x | |
| AG | x | | | |
| MHG | | x | | |
| LY | 30-Aug | | | |
| MG | | | x | |
| MB | | | x | |
| TB | | | x | |
| RW | | | x | |
| PS | | | x | |
| TF | 30-Aug | | | |
| TW | x | | | |
| ME | | | x | |
| CW | | | x | |
| JV | | | x | |
| BP | 12-Aug | | | |
| AS | | | x | |
| RL | | | | x |

# Table 3 (Group "C")

| Group "C" | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subject** | **Respond** | **Decline** | **No Resonse** | **N/A** |
| | | | | |
| MM | x | | | |
| EM | | | x | |
| VW | | | | x |
| AH | x | | | |
| AG | | | x | |
| GB | x | | | |
| RC | | | x | |
| RK | | | x | |
| JM | | | x | |
| MB | | | x | |
| JR | | | x | |
| PM | | | x | |
| VM | | | x | |
| MA | | | x | |
| LB | | | x | |
| PB | | | x | |
| TH | | | x | |
| ML | | | x | |
| WG | x | | | |
| CM | | | x | |
| JD | | | x | |

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